

NOAA FY 2002 Budget Request Fact Sheet

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

+\$3.0 Million in FY 2002

(part of NOAA's Coastal Conservation Activities Initiative)



The Challenge

NOAA is requesting an increase of \$3 million to improve understanding of the utility of marine protected areas (MPA) in sustaining and protecting America's valuable marine resources. The request will provide managers, industry, and the public with new information and tools to help ensure effective use of MPAs.

"MPA" is a general term for places given special protections for natural or historic marine resources by local, state, federal or tribal authorities. MPAs have been used for many years as tools by managers to help rebuild and sustain fisheries, protect essential fish habitats and biodiversity, provide recreational opportunities, balance competing uses, and preserve other natural or historic resources.

As part of the Coastal Conservation Initiative, NOAA's request will support work with all levels of government and stakeholders to: (1) prepare the first comprehensive inventory of U.S. MPAs, (2) begin assessments of the effectiveness of the current system of U.S. MPAs, and (3) provide new science, information

Rapidly increasing coastal populations and demands for use of marine resources has driven the search for tools to help sustain, rebuild and protect America's valuable marine resources. Scientists, managers, industry representatives and others have called for better information on how to design and use MPAs effectively to help meet the increasing challenges of sustaining marine resources.

Many different kinds of MPAs have been established over the past 100 years, but there is no comprehensive inventory or assessment of this diverse collection of U.S. MPAs. For example, there are over 200 federally-managed national parks, refuges and marine sanctuaries that include parts of the marine environment. Coastal states and communities have established many areas with special protections, such as town beaches, state wildlife reserves and fishery management areas. And various tribal protected areas exist in coastal areas of many states.



and tools to help guide efficient and effective use of MPAs.

NOAA FY 2002 Budget

FY 2002

Ocean & Coastal Management

Ocean Management

Marine Protected Areas \$3.0

Total Change from FY 2001 \$3.0

This diverse collection of U.S. MPAs has been established to help achieve a variety of goals including providing recreational opportunities, sustaining and rebuilding fisheries, and protecting sensitive species and habitats.

Additional information is needed to understand the effectiveness of this collection of sites in

each region, how to increase coordination and effectiveness among these sites to better meet increasing demands, and how to help existing local, state, federal and tribal authorities most effectively use MPAs to meet their goals.

The Solution

NOAA will work with government and non-governmental partners to provide critical information and tools to help inventory, assess and improve existing MPAs as management tools. Working with these partners, NOAA will provide:

- (1) a sound scientific foundation for MPA design and management;
- (2) an inventory and assessment of the existing system of U.S. MPAs;
- (3) a cohesive strategy on how to increase the effectiveness of MPAs; and
- (4) an open, equitable and meaningful process to engage user groups and the American public on these important issues.

Funding for this initiative will allow NOAA will complete the following important tasks:

- Complete and maintain the first comprehensive inventory of existing U.S. MPAs;
- Support an MPA Center to provide science, tools and strategies to assess and improve the effectiveness of U.S. MPAs;
- Support a web site to provide data on MPAs;
- Establish and support an MPA Advisory Committee to provide input and recommendations from non-federal entities;
- Support consultations and partnerships with states, territories, tribes, Regional Fishery Management Councils, academia, industry and other entities on MPAs;

These tasks need to be completed to understand how to efficiently and effectively use MPAs along with other management measures to (1) meet increasing demands for use of valuable marine resources, and (2) ensure long-term protection of valuable marine resources for

current and future generations. Funding will not be used to alter or interfere with the authorities or management of existing MPAs, or to create new MPAs. Any changes to MPAs remain under the discretion of the existing authorities responsible for those sites.

Funding will allow NOAA to complete the tasks listed above through the National Center for Marine Protected Areas (Center) within NOAA's National Ocean Service. The Center is responsible for coordination and support for the tasks listed above including completion of the inventory of U.S. MPAs, the MPA web site, the MPA Advisory Committee. Funding will enable the Center to support a variety of partnerships with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to help fill critical gaps in science, information, training, tools and services related to MPAs. The FY 2002 request includes funding to help complete the complex task of inventorying existing marine managed areas (including MPAs) through the use of contracts or grants to states, tribes, organizations, or regional institutions to assist in the information collection process.

Funding will also ensure input from a broad range of stakeholders. NOAA will provide staff and logistical support for the MPA Advisory Committee, and maintain the web site on MPAs to provide valuable information and services to a broad range of users. The prototype web site, *mpa.gov*, has already been established to fill important information gaps. Funding will allow NOAA to complete and maintain the site with regular revisions to meet user needs.

NOAA's Role

As the Nation's premier ocean and coastal agency, NOAA has a long history of providing valuable science, tools and strategies to address critical needs and solve difficult problems related to management of marine resources. Through this initiative, NOAA will work with many partners to improve understanding of the role and utility of marine protected areas (MPA) in sustaining and protecting America's valuable marine resources.